

BILK-MAGAZINE No. 3

A NEWSLETTER FOR WATERMONSTER
SIGHTINGS BY ULRICH MAGIN



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BEHEMOTH:

- A monster was seen in June 1984 in Baiguo Lake, Tibet, by Chinese soldiers. It was brown and huge, with a head with horns. Before that, 5 monsters were seen in Lake Tiangi in August 1980. *Depêche Agence France-Presse*, 27.3.1985. (Credit: J.-J. Barloy)

- Seal in Loch Ness: Henry Bauer, who was at the loch in May, saw the seal. And the *Inverness Courier*, 16.1.1934, p.4ef & 5b: seals were seen in River Ness on 13.1.34, and at Fort Augustus, 15.1.34.

- Old Nessie sightings: In his book Binns says that there exists no real monster tradition at Loch Ness. He was definitely correct at some points but is in error here, and even fakes to prove he is right: when he quotes the letter of Captain Macdonald to the *Inverness Courier* (12.5.1933, p.5e), who denies that there is a monster tradition, he omits only one sentence of the whole letter, which is very interesting, as this is the following sentence: "No doubt, in recent times, there have been stories about people seeing unusual occurrences on the loch, and ascribing them to the movements of a big fish." This simply means there must have been rumours of sightings at the time.

And I think I have located two more pre-1930 references to a monster in the loch: the story of a traveller who is killed by a kelpie, which is mentioned in W. Grant-Stewart: *The Popular Superstitions and Festive Amusements of the Highlanders of Scotland*, Edinburgh 1823, p.147, and W. Gregor: *Notes on the Folklore of the North East of Scotland*, London 1881, p.38. Both mention that the story happened at Loch Ness.

- I also have two pre-1930 reports of Morag, the Loch Morar monster, which seem to have been overlooked so far: W.T. Kilgour: *Lochaber in War and Peace*, Paisley 1908, p.173-4; and 'Highland News', Inverness, 14.4.1917. I do not know what these sources write, as I only found them in a bibliography, but think it might be interesting.

ISIS:

- The carcass of one of the sirens was found in ancient times in Campania, Italy. Her body was buried in Naples, where the geographer Strabon saw her tomb in the first century BC. Jorge Luis Borges: *El libro de los Seres Imaginarios*, Bruguera Alfaguara, Barcelona 1979, p.215.

- In summer 1929 several sightings of mermaids were made at Ardsheal, Argyll, Scotland, 14 Miles from Fort William. It was half human, half fish, with white skin, long dark hair, pointed arms and small hands. One time the creature was observed some two hours until it laid down on the water's surface and slowly swam away. Sightings were always made by local witnesses, when the sea was calm. They all happened in the morning. ('Folk-Lore', 1929, p.88 - this is a folklore magazine, but I do not have the original article).

LEVIATHAN:

- I think everybody has heard of the many-humped or many-finned sea-serpent, but who knows the many legged? There are three reports from the English North Sea coast, all within the last 50 years: The first was found on May 22, 1934, near Bridlington, Humberside. "The fish has a tail like that of a shark, a body like that of a dogfish, it has no fins, and has the head of an octopus and 10 tentacles two of

which are 13 in. long. Over all it measures 2 ft. 7 in. Mr C. Waller, the chief Coastguard, said it seemed to be a combination of three different fishes. It was bright red and its eyes were an inch wide. It had been dead for about a day. It would be sent to the Natural History Museum for identification." (The Times, 23.5.1934, p.10a)

In November 1953, a similar animal appeared at Canvey Island in the mouth of the Thames. It was found dead by fishermen, who described it thus: 80 cm long, brown skin with red points, large eyes. It had legs and feet.

One year later, on August 11, 1954, again at Canvey Island, Joseph Overs found a new monster, this time 1 m long with a weight of 15 kilos. The animal had gills, a mouth with sharp teeth, pink skin without scales, and, small legs with tiny feet with toes arranged like a horse-shoe. (The latter both from George Langelaan: Unheimliche Wirklichkeiten, dtv 1975, p.147)

I personally think that these carcasses were of ordinary big squids, but as all three carcasses were analyzed by scientists, there should be a report somewhere with the exact species of cephalopod involved.

- In last BILK I quoted a report of a giant ray. There is a second report of that kind, though I think the size of the ray is more acceptable. In July 1502, near Azua, Santo Domingo, "Vizcaina's" boat came upon a giant ray, 'as big as a medium sized bed', lying asleep on the surface. The men struck home with a harping iron, the fish quickly drew the line taut, and towed the boat through the water at great speed, so that the people aboard the caravels wondered by what witchcraft it moved so rapidly without sail or oars. Presently the great fish sounded, and died. He was hauled alongside "Vizcaina" and hoisted aboard by tackles." S. E. Morison: Christopher Columbus, Oxford University Press, London, n.d., p.592.

KRAKEN:

- 'Fabelwesen des Meeres', by Sonnfried Streicher, published by Hinstorff, Rostok 1985, in the German Democratic Republic, gives facsimile-pages of Olaus Magnus' book in its first German edition. On page 54, he reproduces Olaus' 5th chapter on the "Physeter". In this Olaus quotes Petrus Martyr, an Italian living in the 16th century, who wrote the first book about Columbus' New discovered lands. Olaus only quotes one sentence, stating that Martyr described a seamonster "which picked a sleeping man out of a ship and carried him away." As Martyr wrote about the Caribbean, this may be the first report of giant cephalopod in the area. I tried in vain to get any copy of Martyr's book to find more details.

MARINE LIFE:

- The source for the shark attack quoted in issue 2 was Die Rheinpfalz, 5.3.1985.

- The last issue of Fortean Times (no.43) reported an attack of jellyfish against a nuclear reactor. I have a report from the Süddeutsche Zeitung, 20.7.1972, p.32d, of Japanese jellyfish attacking a power plant near Tokio, and three more from the S.Z. of jellyfish-invasions: In Summer 1972 in the Baltic Sea (14.8.72, p.7b), 1981 at Sardinia (10.8.1981, p.8b) and at the Cote Azur, France (22.6.1982, p.36c)

- 50 whales stranded at the east coast of Australia at the end of June. The newspaper report I have does not give the species of whale involved, but the animals were up to 5 m long. Some of the were towed back into the water, but swam ashore again and died. (Die Rheinpfalz, 26.6.85)

END!

This is all for now, I hope you like it. Please tell me your comments and new sightings you may come across. My address is: Ulrich Magin, Stuhlbrüderhofstraße 4, 6704 Mutterstadt, WEST GERMANY
Next BILK will appear in September, but possibly later than usual, as I will be in Britain from mid August to mid September.